Wolf's Head

By Von Allan

Issue 12

Wolf's Head

By Von Allan

Edited by Sam Boswell

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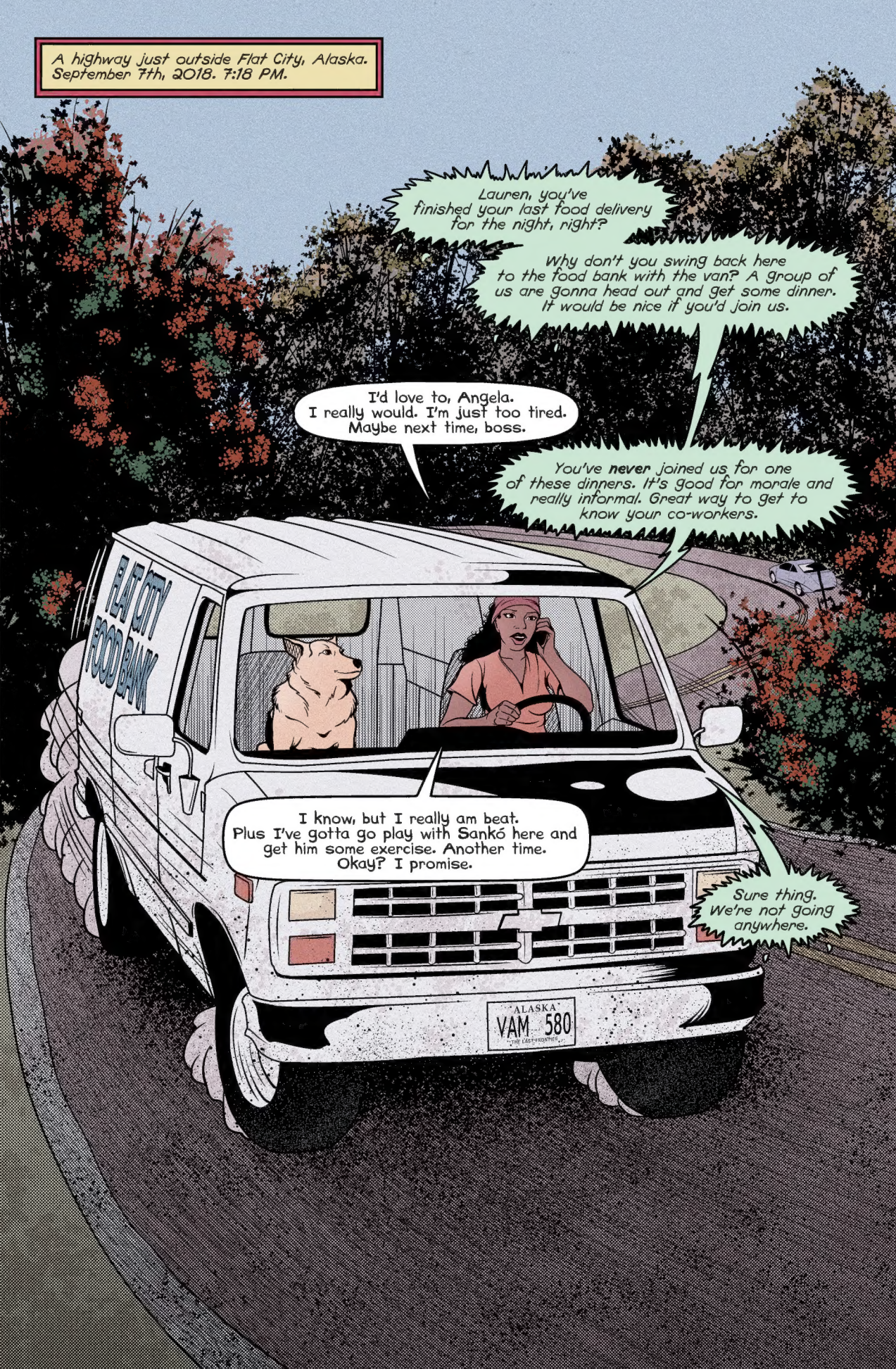
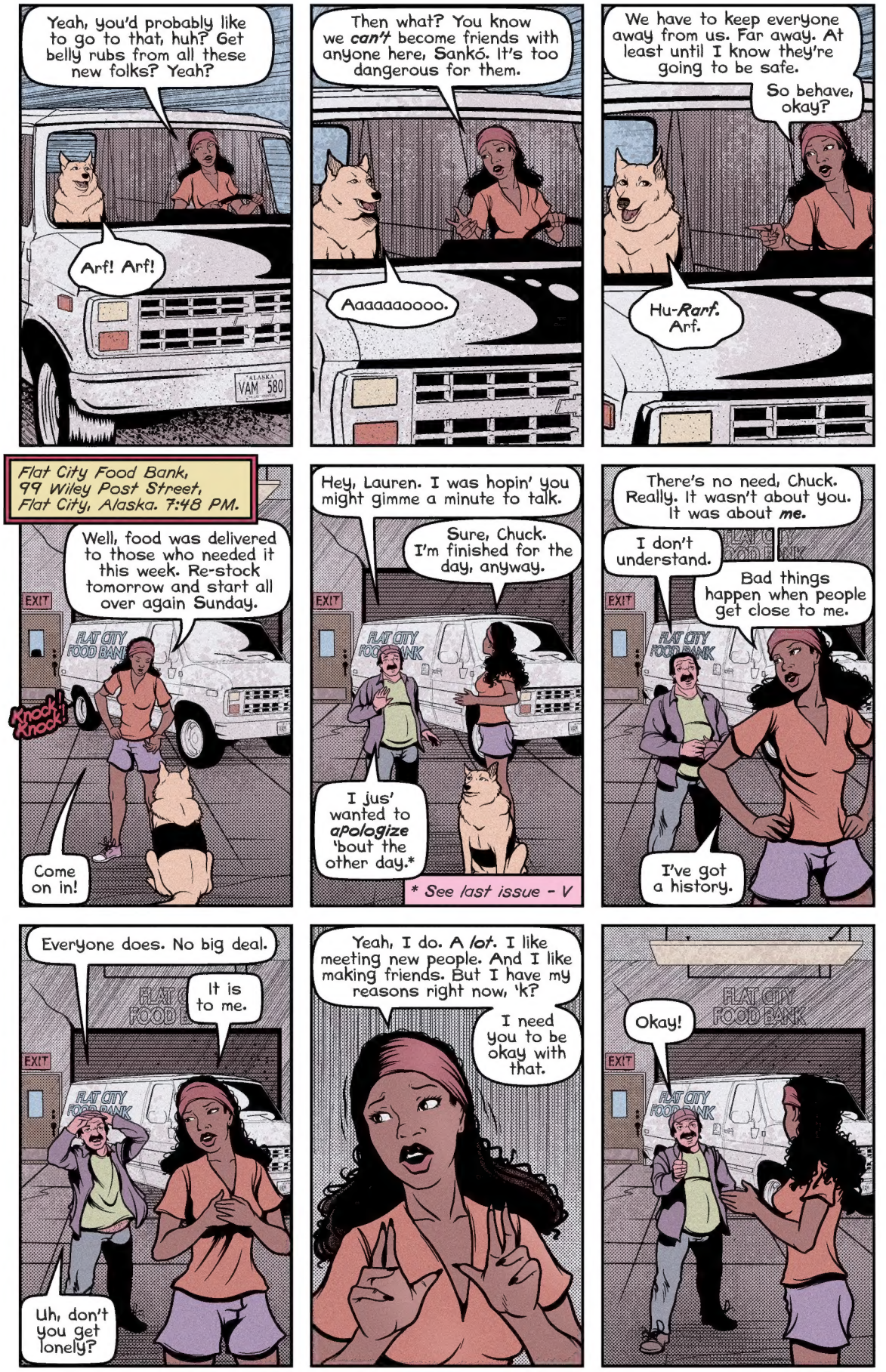
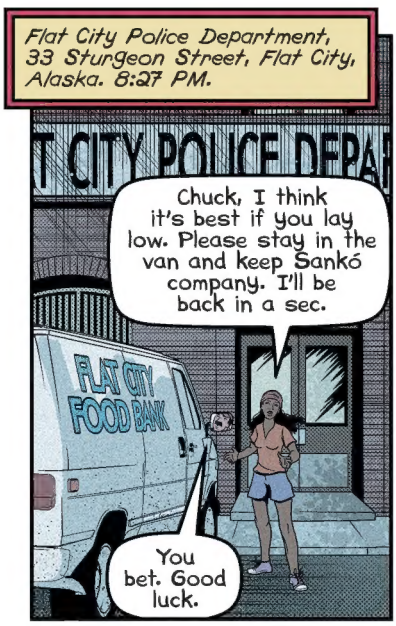

A highway just outside Flat City, Alaska. September 7th, 2018. 7:18 PM.
Lauren, you've finished your last food delivery for the night, right?
Why don't you swing back here to the food bank with the van? A group of us are gonna head out and get some dinner. It would be nice if you'd join us.
I'd love to, Angela. I really would. I'm just too tired. Maybe next time, boss.
You've never joined us for one of these dinners. It's good for morale and really informal. Great way to get to know your co-workers.
FLAT CITY FOOD BANK
I know, but I really am beat. Plus I've gotta go play with Sankó here and get him some exercise. Another time. Okay? I promise.
Sure thing. We're not going anywhere.
ALASKA
VAM 580


Yeah, you'd probably like to go to that, huh? Get belly rubs from all these new folks? Yeah?
Arf! Arf!
ALASKA VAM 580
Then what? You know we *can't* become friends with anyone here, Sankó. It's too dangerous for them.
Aaaaaaoooo.
We have to keep everyone away from us. Far away. At least until I know they're going to be safe.
So behave, okay?
Hu-*Rarf*. Arf.
Flat City Food Bank, 99 Wiley Post Street, Flat City, Alaska. 7:48 PM.
Well, food was delivered to those who needed it this week. Re-stock tomorrow and start all over again Sunday.
EXIT
FLAT CITY FOOD BANK
Knock! Knock!
Come on in!
Hey, Lauren. I was hopin' you might gimme a minute to talk.
Sure, Chuck. I'm finished for the day, anyway.
I jus' wanted to *apologize* 'bout the other day.*
* *See last issue - V*
There's no need, Chuck. Really. It wasn't about you. It was about *me*.
I don't understand.
Bad things happen when people get close to me.
I've got a history.
Everyone does. No big deal.
It is to me.
Uh, don't you get lonely?
Yeah, I do. A *lot*. I like meeting new people. And I like making friends. But I have my reasons right now, 'k?
I need you to be okay with that.
Okay!

Well, after you took off, I went an' talked to the cops 'bout Billy and the others. They're still missing.
But no go. Nothin'. They weren't interested in finding them at all.
Did you lose your temper?
Yeah, maybe I did, sure. A bit.
Okay, more than a bit. But they had it comin', y'know? Fuckin' cops, not helpin' people who actually need helpin.' Stomping on us instead. I--
--I know, I get it.
Right, okay.
But Billy and his friends have been gone from our tent city for 'bout eleven days.
Shit, that's a long time now.
It's weird. Really weird. I dunno where they've gotten to, but if they were okay they'd a been back by now. No doubt in my mind.
Damn right. You'd think that would motivate the cops, but nope. Not a bit. Put us homeless in a box and that's that. Who the fuck cares what happens to us?
And if the cops don't wanna help, then...
Then they're running out of time.
Exactly.
Okay. Maybe I should try talking to the police for you?
Awesome!
They know you work here. They know yer respectable.
Uh, cops, black folks, and 'respectable' doesn't tend to go together.
Neither do cops and the homeless.
Right.
Well, let's go over to the 'cop shop' and see what they say.
EXIT
FOOD BANK

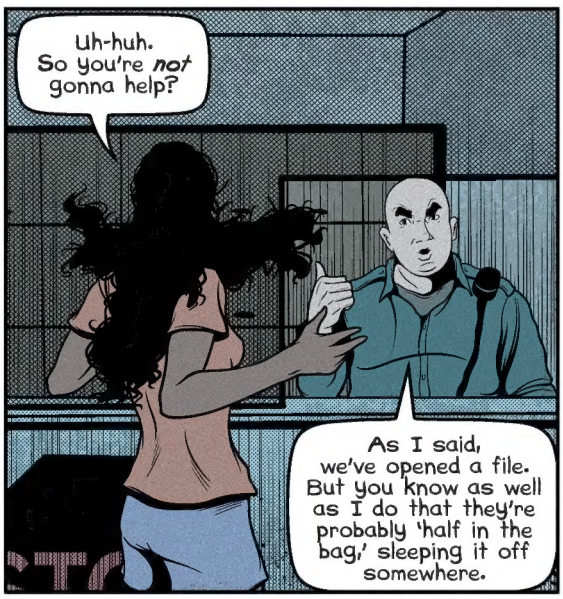

Flat City Police Department, 33 Sturgeon Street, Flat City, Alaska. 8:27 PM.
Chuck, I think it's best if you lay low. Please stay in the van and keep Sankó company. I'll be back in a sec.
You bet. Good luck.
FLAT CITY FOOD BANK

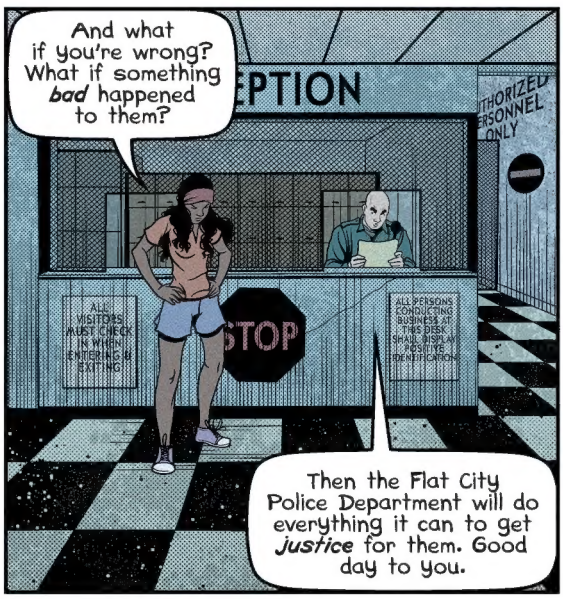
8:39 PM.
As I told your friend, we've opened up a file.
A file? They've been missing for almost two weeks!
We're working on it.

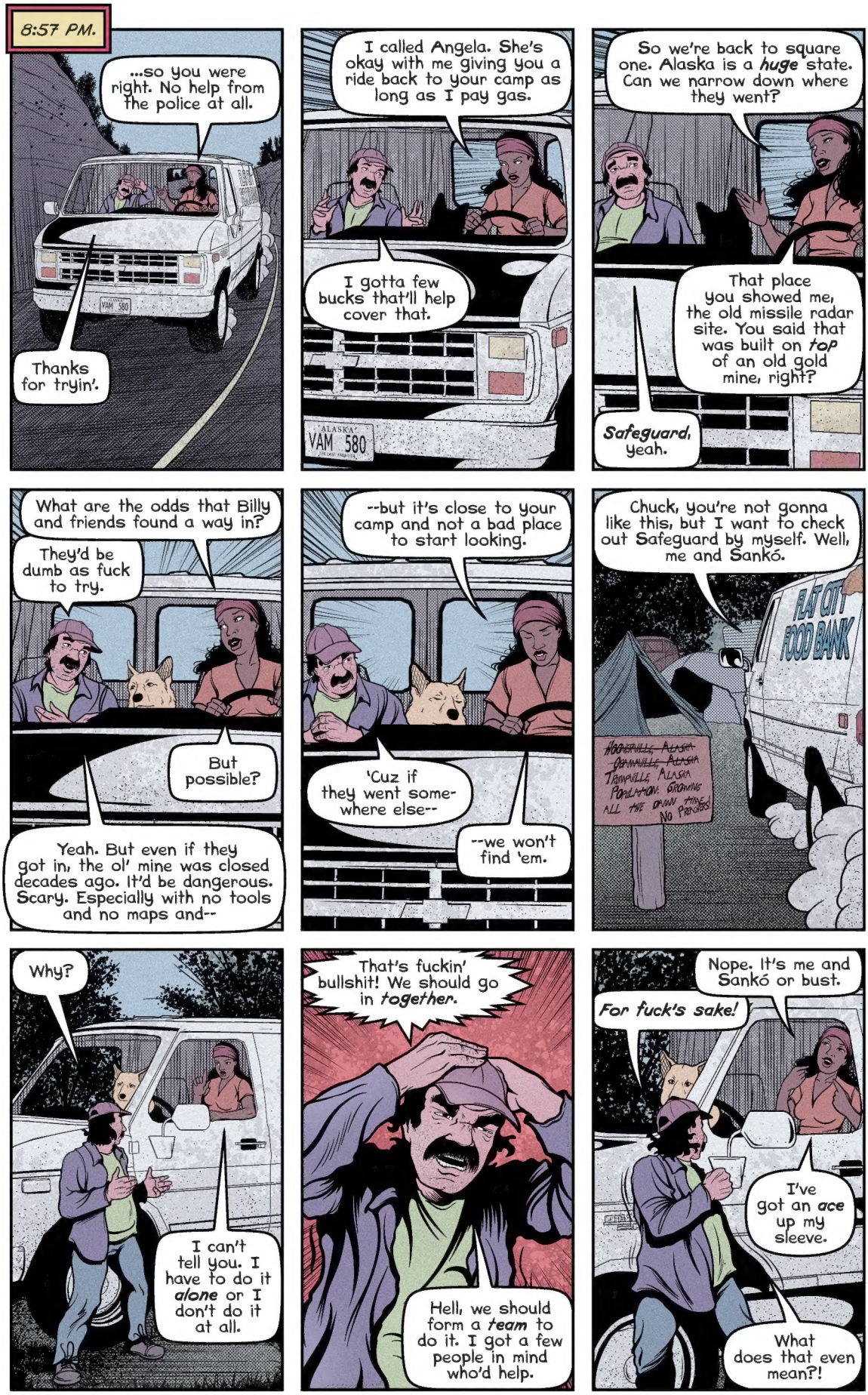
Doesn't sound like it.
You might want to re-think that attitude, miss. You won't get far with that here.

Oh, screw my attitude. These people--
--Listen, Miss--
Lauren. Lauren Greene.
Listen, Miss Greene. We get a *lot* of transient folks here, okay?

Sometimes they come for work on the rigs. Sometimes they just come to get away from it all down south. Wives, husbands, kids, whatever.
Sometimes they go missing. Nine times out of ten they're just fine.
Just out in the bush for a week.


Uh-huh. So you're *not* gonna help?
As I said, we've opened a file. But you know as well as I do that they're probably 'half in the bag,' sleeping it off somewhere.


And what if you're wrong? What if something *bad* happened to them?
Then the Flat City Police Department will do everything it can to get *justice* for them. Good day to you.


8:57 PM.
...so you were right. No help from the police at all.
Thanks for tryin'.
I called Angela. She's okay with me giving you a ride back to your camp as long as I pay gas.
I gotta few bucks that'll help cover that.
So we're back to square one. Alaska is a huge state. Can we narrow down where they went?
That place you showed me, the old missile radar site. You said that was built on top of an old gold mine, right?
Safeguard, yeah.
What are the odds that Billy and friends found a way in?
They'd be dumb as fuck to try.
But possible?
Yeah. But even if they got in, the ol' mine was closed decades ago. It'd be dangerous. Scary. Especially with no tools and no maps and--
--but it's close to your camp and not a bad place to start looking.
'Cuz if they went somewhere else--
--we won't find 'em.
Chuck, you're not gonna like this, but I want to check out Safeguard by myself. Well, me and Sankó.
FLAT CITY FOOD BANK
Why?
I can't tell you. I have to do it alone or I don't do it at all.
That's fuckin' bullshit! We should go in together.
Hell, we should form a team to do it. I got a few people in mind who'd help.
Nope. It's me and Sankó or bust.
For fuck's sake!
I've got an ace up my sleeve.
What does that even mean?!

The Bored Humor Rooming House, 75 Beaton Street, Flat City, Alaska. 10:33 PM.

Yeah, right on, buddy! You really are my *ace*, huh? Super intelligent shape-changing machine!

♫ Lauren! ♪

That's great! Can't talk much, but are you ever learning.

And that's why Chuck and the others just *can't* know about you.

Too many questions. And those type of questions will draw some attention. Attention from those who can't let you go.

Safeguard Missile Complex, some miles outside of Flat City...
September 8th, 2018. 7:41 AM.

Well, we've completed a full loop around the pyramid and I don't see any obvious cracks, fissures, or any other sneaky way in.

Makes sense. These walls must be really damn thick.

But there *are* footprints. Pretty fresh, too. And cigarette butts. People have been here. ***Recently.***

I dunno, Sankó. There's something creepy about this place.

Chuck is right. Billy and his friends would be out of their minds to go into this place.

Well, let's follow the footprints and see where they go.

The doors? They're barricaded with debris, but the footprints go right through it.

Maybe the debris is a *trick?*

Yeah, it is! Look at this, Sankó! Clever! Billy knows no one comes out here.

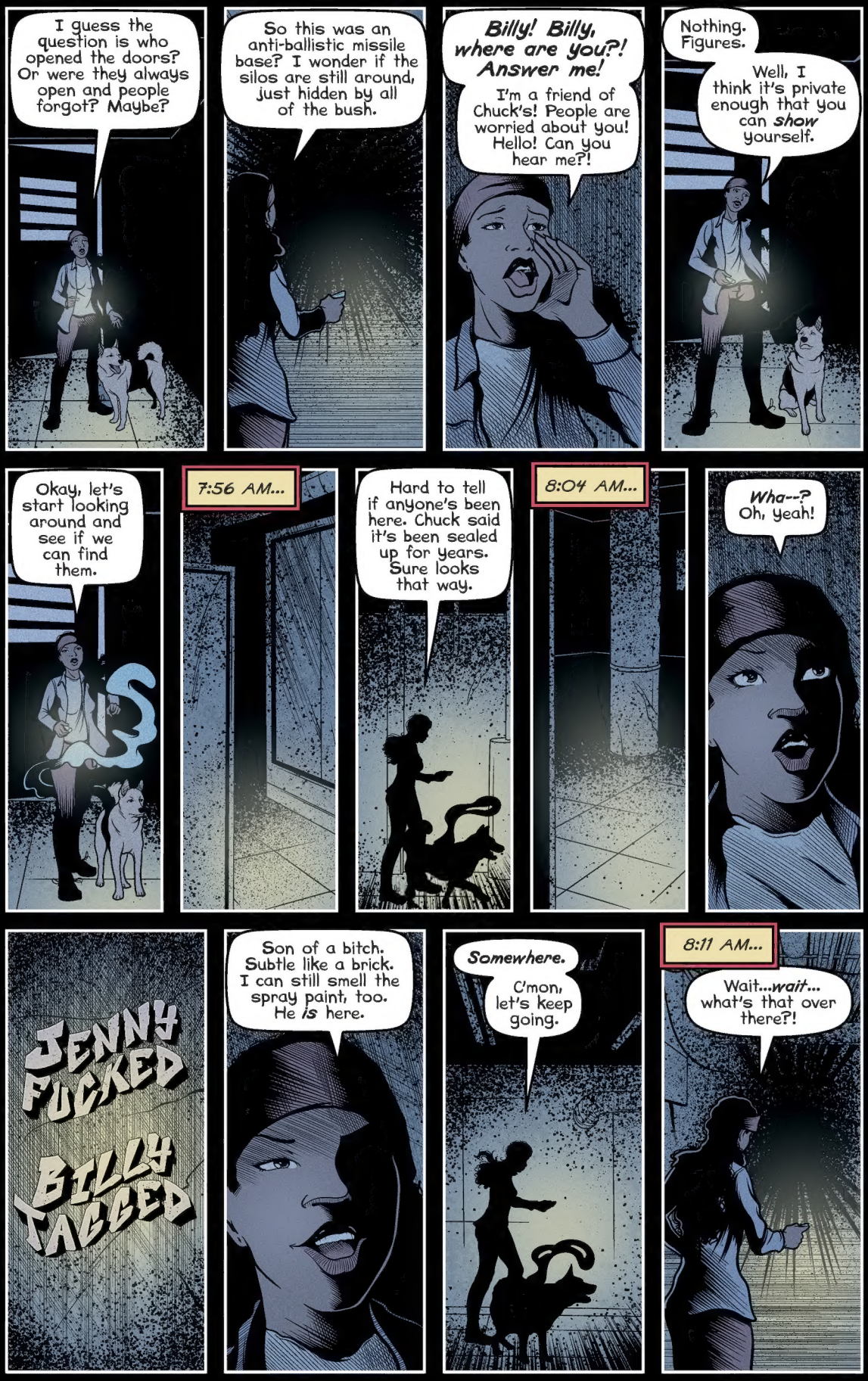
He just hid the front with crap.

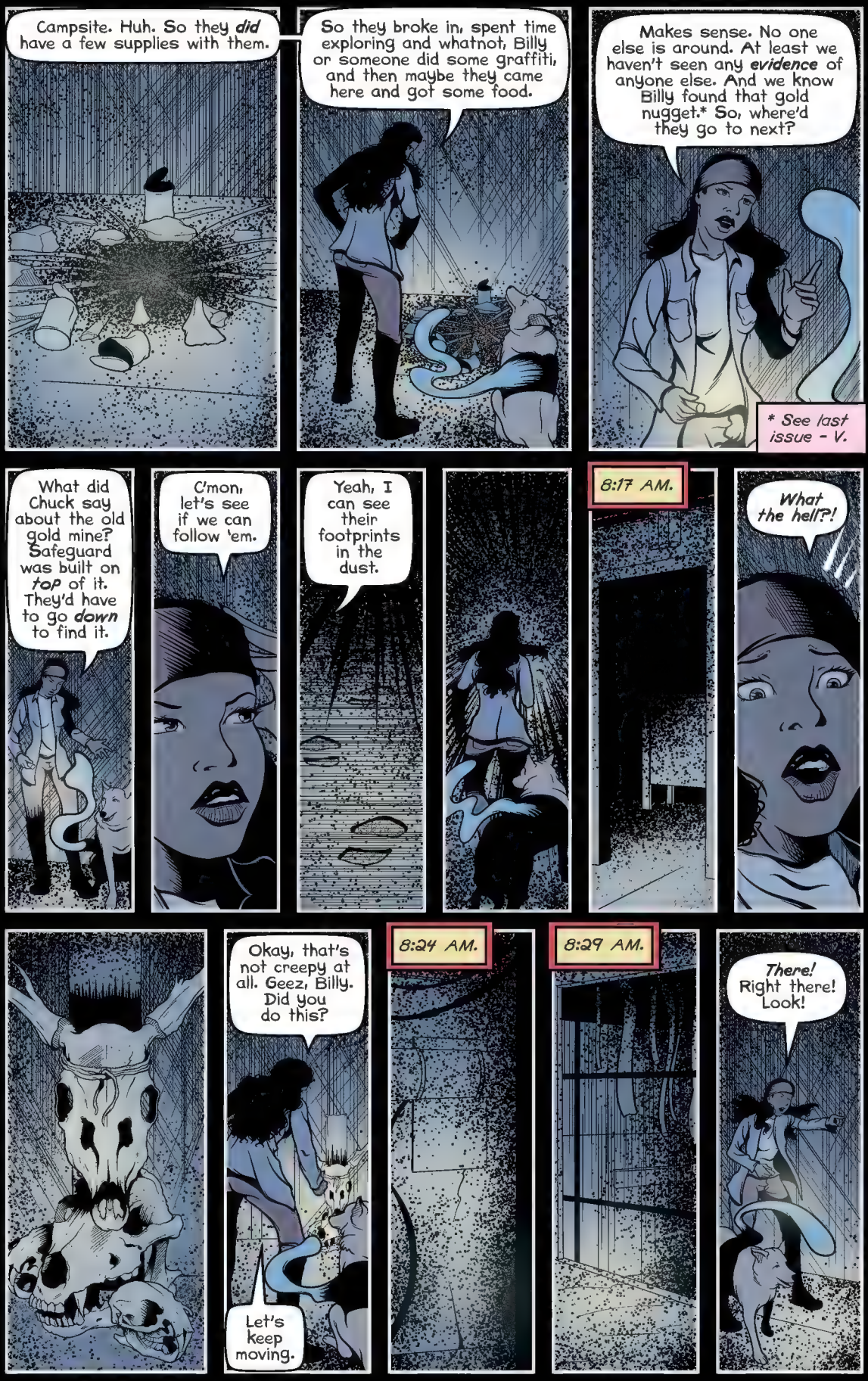
With the barricade, the doors look closed.

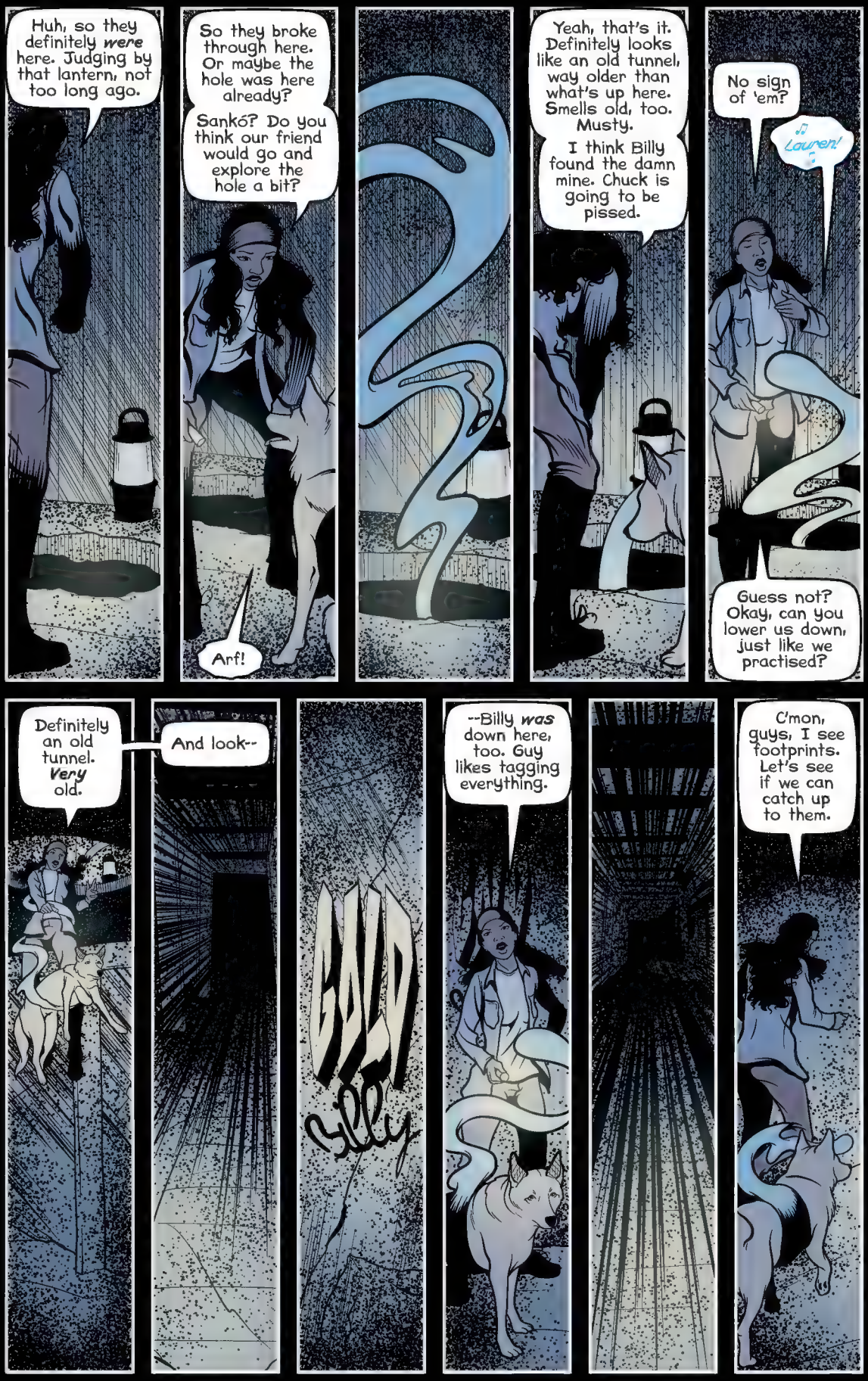
That's what Chuck thinks.

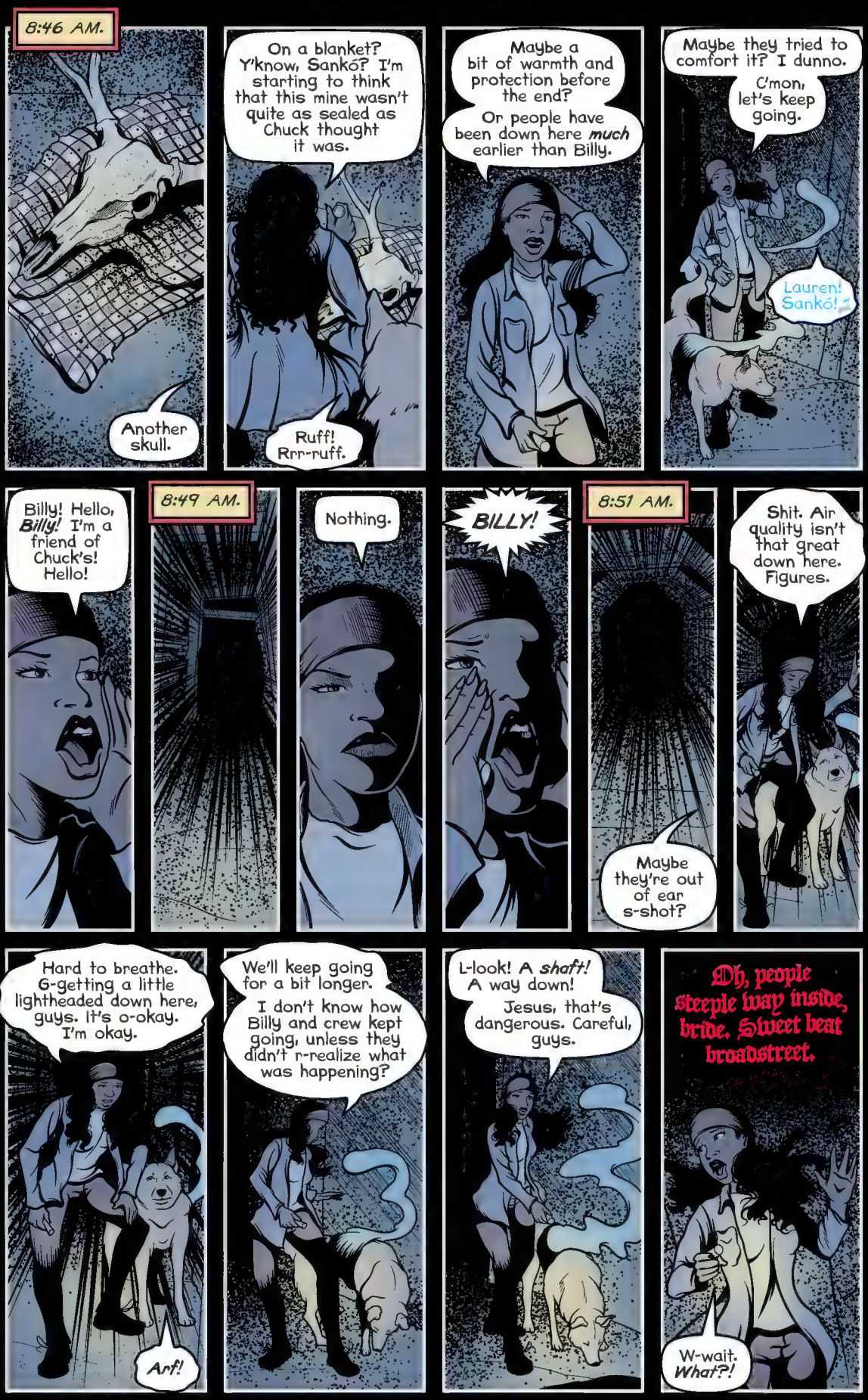
That's what Billy ***wanted*** Chuck to think.

Alright, you ***two***. Let's head in and see if we can find Billy and his friends.


I guess the question is who opened the doors? Or were they always open and people forgot? Maybe?
So this was an anti-ballistic missile base? I wonder if the silos are still around, just hidden by all of the bush.
Billy! Billy, where are you?! Answer me!
I'm a friend of Chuck's! People are worried about you! Hello! Can you hear me?!
Nothing. Figures.
Well, I think it's private enough that you can show yourself.
Okay, let's start looking around and see if we can find them.
7:56 AM...
Hard to tell if anyone's been here. Chuck said it's been sealed up for years. Sure looks that way.
8:04 AM...
Wha--? Oh, yeah!
JENNY FUCKED BILLY TAGGED
Son of a bitch. Subtle like a brick. I can still smell the spray paint, too. He is here.
Somewhere.
C'mon, let's keep going.
8:11 AM...
Wait...wait... what's that over there?!


Campsite. Huh. So they *did* have a few supplies with them.
So they broke in, spent time exploring and whatnot, Billy or someone did some graffiti, and then maybe they came here and got some food.
Makes sense. No one else is around. At least we haven't seen any *evidence* of anyone else. And we know Billy found that gold nugget.* So, where'd they go to next?
* See last issue - V.
What did Chuck say about the old gold mine? Safeguard was built on *top* of it. They'd have to go *down* to find it.
C'mon, let's see if we can follow 'em.
Yeah, I can see their footprints in the dust.
8:17 AM.
What the hell?!
Okay, that's not creepy at all. Geez, Billy. Did you do this?
Let's keep moving.
8:24 AM.
8:29 AM.
There! Right there! Look!


Huh, so they definitely *were* here. Judging by that lantern, not too long ago.
So they broke through here. Or maybe the hole was here already?
Sankó? Do you think our friend would go and explore the hole a bit?
Arf!
Yeah, that's it. Definitely looks like an old tunnel, way older than what's up here. Smells old, too. Musty.
I think Billy found the damn mine. Chuck is going to be pissed.
No sign of 'em?
Lauren!
Guess not? Okay, can you lower us down, just like we practised?
Definitely an old tunnel. *Very* old.
And look--
--Billy *was* down here, too. Guy likes tagging everything.
C'mon, guys, I see footprints. Let's see if we can catch up to them.


8:46 AM.
Another skull.
On a blanket? Y'know, Sankó? I'm starting to think that this mine wasn't quite as sealed as Chuck thought it was.
Ruff! Rrr-ruff.
Maybe a bit of warmth and protection before the end?
Or people have been down here *much* earlier than Billy.
Maybe they tried to comfort it? I dunno.
C'mon, let's keep going.
Lauren! Sankó!
Billy! Hello, *Billy!* I'm a friend of Chuck's! Hello!
8:49 AM.
Nothing.
BILLY!
8:51 AM.
Maybe they're out of ear s-shot?
Shit. Air quality isn't that great down here. Figures.
Hard to breathe. G-getting a little lightheaded down here, guys. It's o-okay. I'm okay.
Arf!
We'll keep going for a bit longer.
I don't know how Billy and crew kept going, unless they didn't r-realize what was happening?
L-look! A *shaft!* A way down!
Jesus, that's dangerous. Careful, guys.
Oh, people steeple way inside, bride. Sweet beat broadstreet.
W-wait. *What?!*

You blew through a chew, you! A tunnel funnel water blotter just around astound, pound.
What the hell?!
Lauren! Sankó!
You came aflame, but fire mired your spire, squire!
Au! Au! Rrowwf!

I skate with freight while guile flows with snow, Joe.

My god...

Sankó! We gotta- We--

W-what are you?

Blue chew while a brain crane rolls a chain. Grain vein down on me, bee.

Chop swap with your boar!

That *sound!* Please. Y-you're hurting us! *Stop!*

Laureeeeeen!

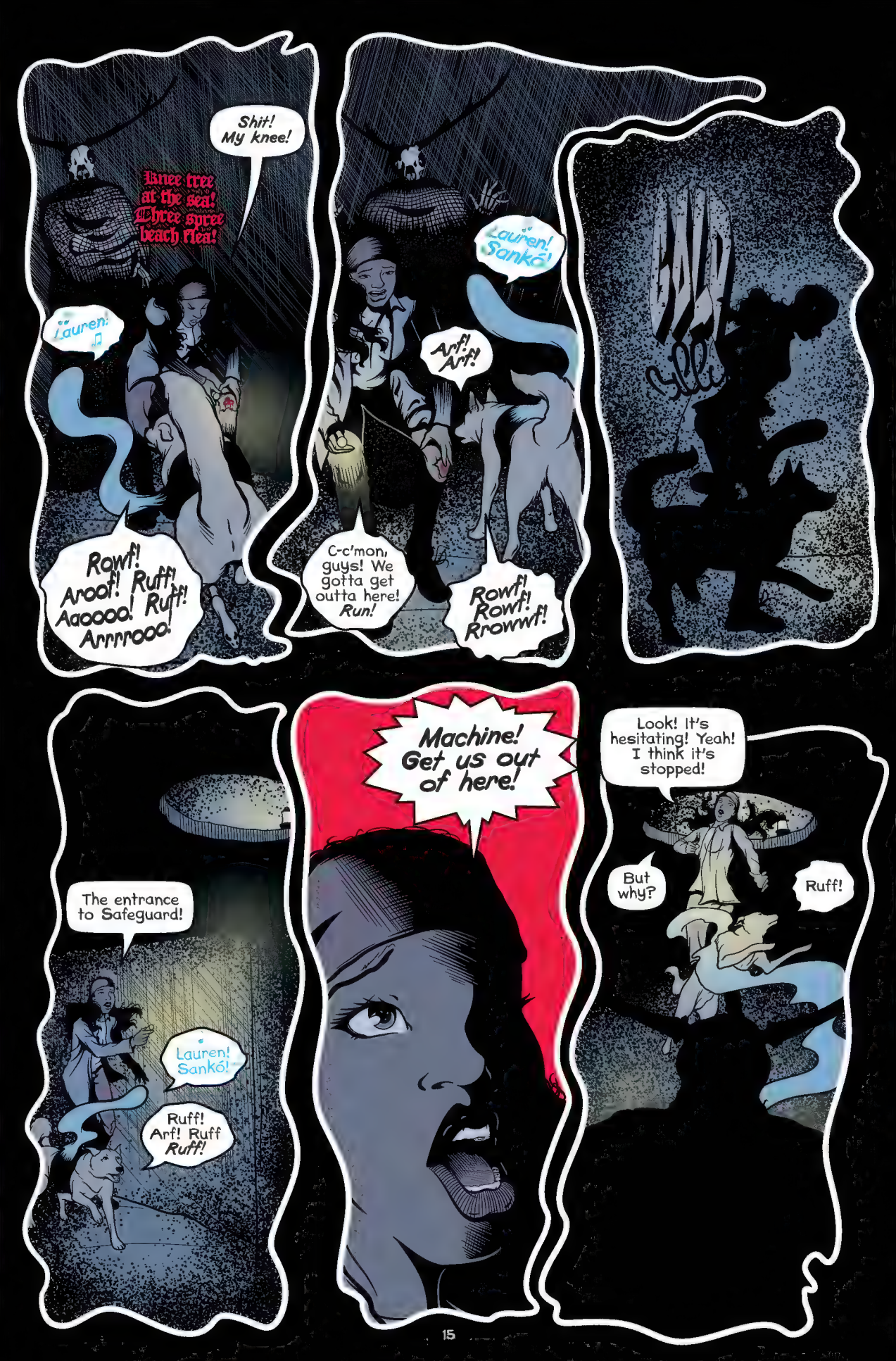
Aaaaaooo!

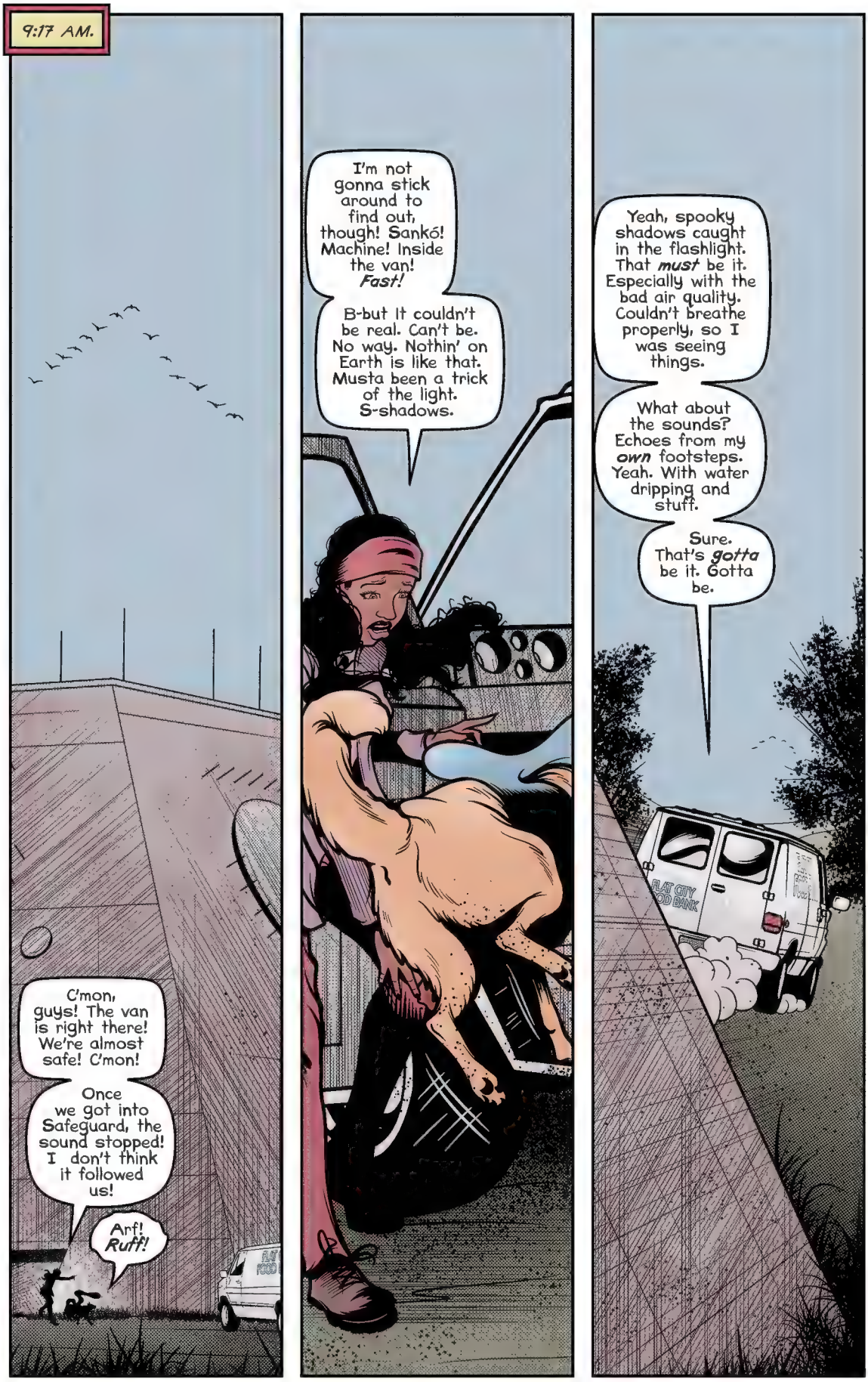
Roar lore out the door!

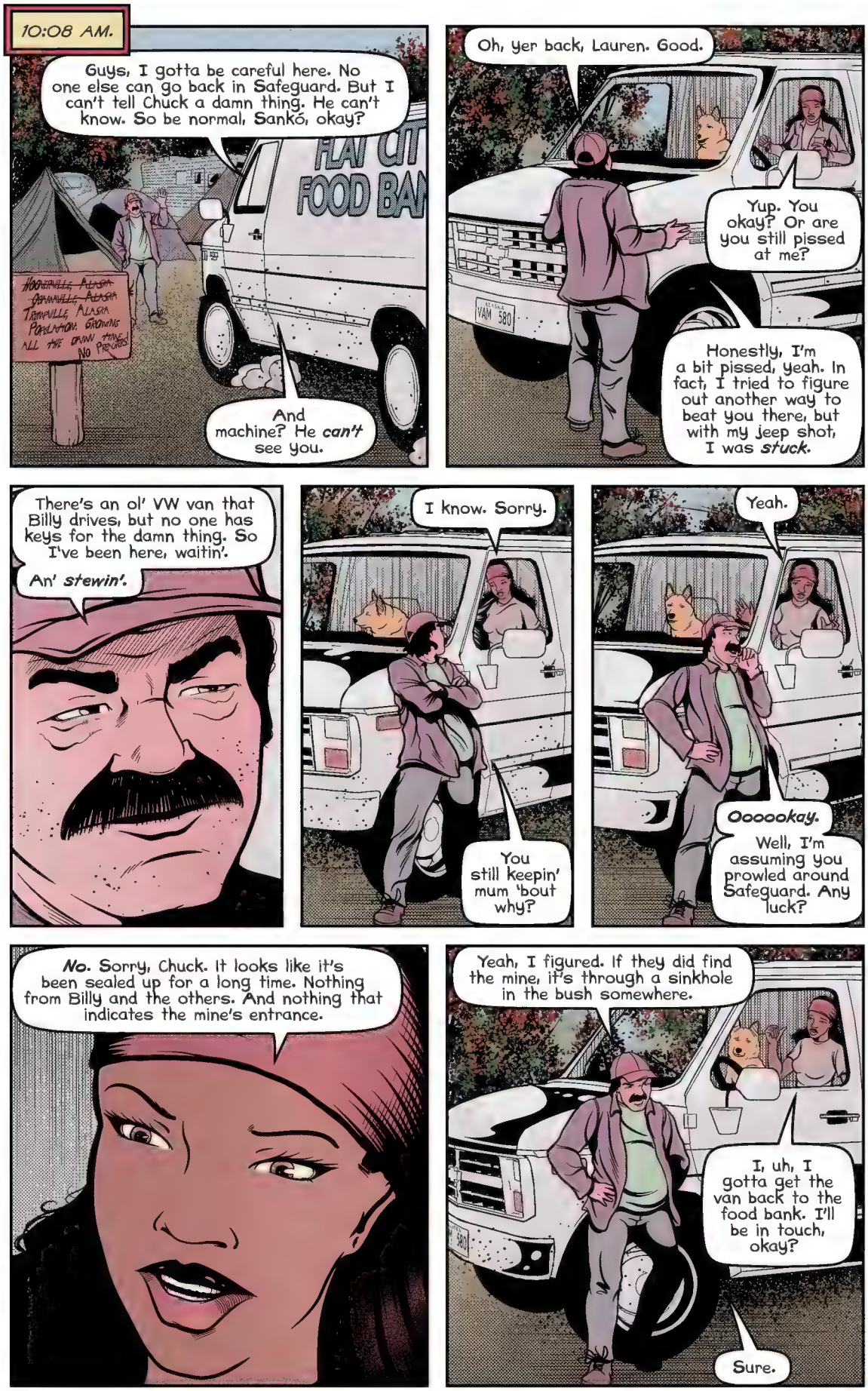
Fun won among the stun, hon!

S-Sankó! Machine! B-back the way we came. *Run!*

Run!
Thriller chiller, caterpillar!
F-faster!
Shit! Rock! Ack!
Oh, no.
Right in a hole, dole. You and me by the sea, knee!
Run, guys!
Letter, better, wage setter!
What is it? Where--
Who's there, where bear? The rain pain out the gain, Jane!
Gotta get outta here. Gotta- ACK! My foot!
Get up! It's right behind me. Gotta get up!
Here ear the granite planet, Janet!


Shit! My knee!
Lauren!
Rowf! Aroot! Ruff! Aaoooo! Ruff! Arrrrooo!
Lauren! Sankó!
Arf! Arf!
C-c'mon, guys! We gotta get outta here! Run!
Rowf! Rowf! Rrowwf!
The entrance to Safeguard!
Lauren! Sankó!
Ruff! Arf! Ruff Ruff!
Machine! Get us out of here!
Look! It's hesitating! Yeah! I think it's stopped!
But why?
Ruff!


9:17 AM.
C'mon, guys! The van is right there! We're almost safe! C'mon!
Once we got into Safeguard, the sound stopped! I don't think it followed us!
Arf! Ruff!
I'm not gonna stick around to find out, though! Sankó! Machine! Inside the van! Fast!
B-but it couldn't be real. Can't be. No way. Nothin' on Earth is like that. Musta been a trick of the light. S-shadows.
Yeah, spooky shadows caught in the flashlight. That must be it. Especially with the bad air quality. Couldn't breathe properly, so I was seeing things.
What about the sounds? Echoes from my own footsteps. Yeah. With water dripping and stuff.
Sure. That's gotta be it. Gotta be.
FLAT CITY FOOD BANK


10:08 AM.
Guys, I gotta be careful here. No one else can go back in Safeguard. But I can't tell Chuck a damn thing. He can't know. So be normal, Sankó, okay?
And machine? He *can't* see you.
Oh, yer back, Lauren. Good.
Yup. You okay? Or are you still pissed at me?
Honestly, I'm a bit pissed, yeah. In fact, I tried to figure out another way to beat you there, but with my jeep shot, I was *stuck*.
There's an ol' VW van that Billy drives, but no one has keys for the damn thing. So I've been here, waitin'.
An' *stewin'*.
I know. Sorry.
You still keepin' mum 'bout why?
Yeah.
Ooooookay.
Well, I'm assuming you prowled around Safeguard. Any luck?
No. Sorry, Chuck. It looks like it's been sealed up for a long time. Nothing from Billy and the others. And nothing that indicates the mine's entrance.
Yeah, I figured. If they did find the mine, it's through a sinkhole in the bush somewhere.
I, uh, I gotta get the van back to the food bank. I'll be in touch, okay?
Sure.

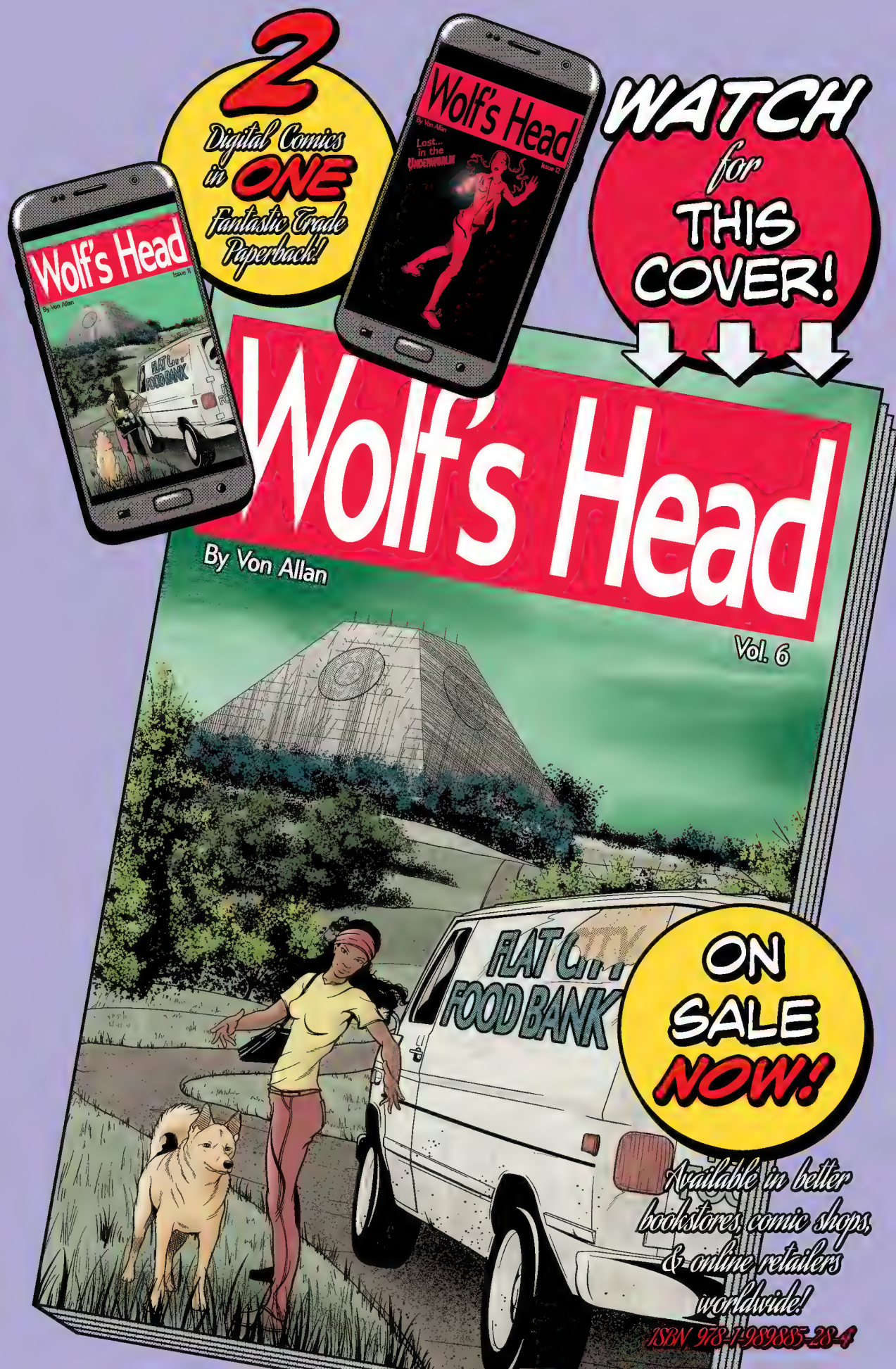
Well, guys, we kept Chuck at arm's length. *Yay*. Doesn't know about our little friend here. *Yay*. Doesn't know anything that could get him in trouble. *Yay*.
So why do I feel like shit?
ALASKA
VAM · 580

Maybe because I *wasn't* able to find Billy? Maybe because I *lied* to Chuck? Pissed him off?
Fuck, I don't know.

What I *do* know is that Billy and the others are still missing. We know Billy went in to Safeguard. He went *deep* inside it. Deeper than we did.
Why didn't he come out? Why didn't *any* of them come out?

We gotta go *back* inside. That's the only way.
We gotta go back, find him and the others, and then get them the hell out of there.
The End.

Next!
Can Lauren find Billy? Is Billy even okay? Is Lauren's burgeoning friendship with Chuck already over? And what the heck did Lauren, Sanko, and the Machine encounter deep underground? All this and more will be revealed in a tale that could only be called...
SOMETHING TO DO WITH DEATH!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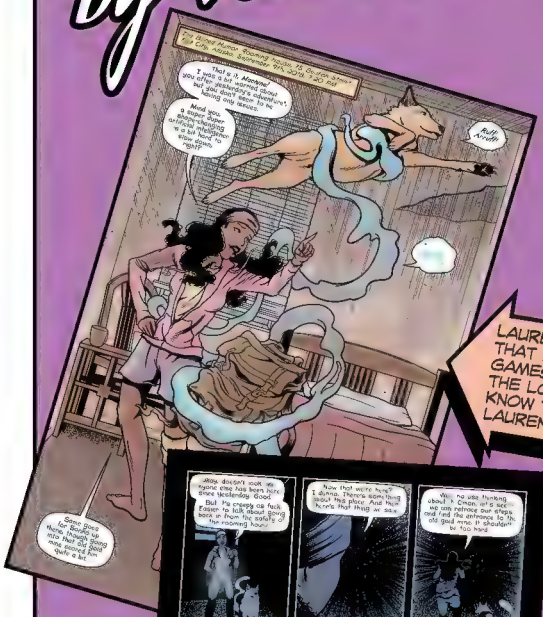

LAUREN, SANKÔ, AND THE AI THINK THAT EVERYTHING WILL BE FUN AND GAMES! BUT GIVEN THEIR SEARCH FOR THE LOST BILLY AND HIS FRIENDS, WE KNOW THAT IT ***CAN'T*** BE TRUE! CAN LAUREN COPE WHEN IT GO SIDEWAYS?

AS LAUREN AND CREW DELVE INTO THE ABANDONED MISSILE COMPLEX ON A QUEST TO FIND BILLY, THEY BEGIN TO REALIZE THAT EVERYTHING IS NOT EXACTLY AS IT SEEMS. DID BILLY REALLY ADVENTURE THIS FAR? AND IF SO, ***WHERE*** IS HE?

DEEP INSIDE THE COMPLEX, LAUREN ONCE AGAIN ENCOUNTERS THE TERRIFYING ***SKELETAL MONSTER*** THAT SHE SAW BEFORE. IT CAN'T POSSIBLY EXIST, BUT SOMEHOW DOES! IS IT REAL? IS IT ALL IN HER HEAD? WHAT'S HER NEXT MOVE?

Great! ✓

Great! ✓

Great! ✓

IT'S STUPDENDOUS!

OUT SOON!

Wolf's Head

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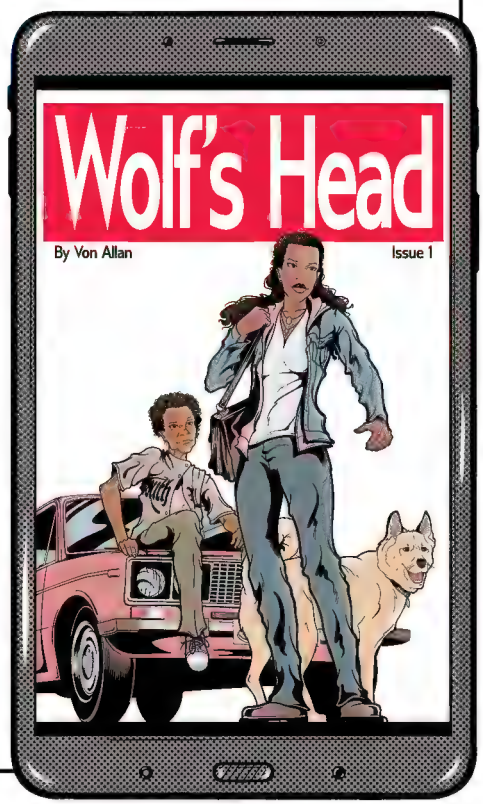

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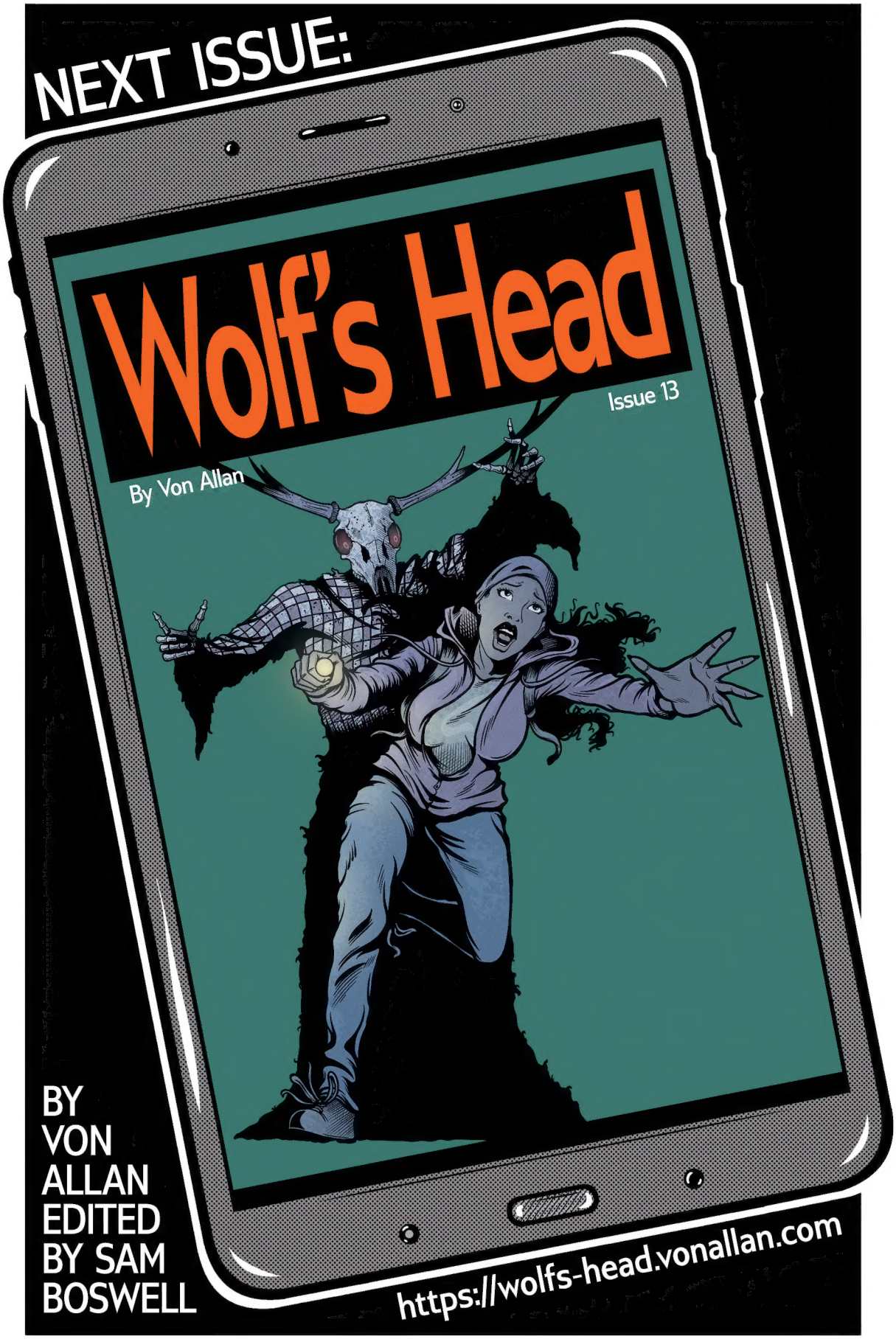

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